

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IX IRAN

These statements were made, apparently, with the conviction that some accommodation could be reached with the British and the Russians and that the Shah's person would not constitute an obstacle. It was generally believed in Iran that the Shah's mistaken hope was due to his misinformation about the real state of affairs. A theory, quite plausible, was advanced that his advisers did not dare to inform him fully about the seriousness of the situation and thus led him to draw erroneous conclusions.

By the middle of September it became obvious that the incessant hostile propaganda made his position untenable. On September 16 Reza abdicated in favor of his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who was proclaimed Shah by the Majlis on the same day. Significantly the British and Soviet forces entered Teheran on the following morning, September 17. The deposed monarch left Iran for Isfahan and on September 28 embarked at Bandar Abbas on a British vessel S.S. *Bandera*, which took him to the island of Mauritius. The ex-Shah, who had hoped to sail to one of the Latin-American countries, found himself an exile in British custody. Later he was transferred to Johannesburg in South Africa. He died there in 1944.

The accession of the new ruler was followed by a general amnesty to political prisoners. A large number of opposition politicians including radical left-wing elements were released.

Iran became divided into three zones: the British zone, including the southern and central parts of the country; the neutral zone, including Teheran and Meshed; and the Soviet zone, embracing, with some exceptions, the provinces of Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, Gilan,

Astarabad, and Khorasan. The Teheran-Hamadan-Kermanshah-Qasr-i-Shirin road was retained by the British, but Qazvin, lying on the northern branch of this route, found itself in the Soviet zone. No British or Soviet troops were to be kept in Teheran, but this rule was not strictly heeded. The civil and military airports in and around Teheran were taken over by the British and Soviet forces. Military and passenger communications with Russia were established by Soviet air forces. The British Overseas Airways Corporation, acting under the supervision of the Royal Air Force, assured communications with other countries in the Middle East. Soon passport control

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